

Message Text

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R 282008Z MAY 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

INFO AMCONSUL ST JOHNS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 123890

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, CA

SUBJECT: ARGENTIA LABOR RELATIONS

REFS: (A) STATE 103434 (B) OTTAWA 1871

1. REPS OF CUPE, UNDE, AND US NAVY MET AT NAVSTA ARGENTIA ON 7 MAY AS PLANNED. AMCONGEN ST. JOHNS, NEWFOUNDLAND ALSO PRESENT. NAVY DROPPED PRE-CONDITIONS PREVIOUSLY REQUIRED AND AGREED WITH CUPE AND UNDE ON DATE, TIME, PLACE, AND PROCEDURES FOR SECRET BALLOT ELECTION TO DETERMINE UNION BARGAINING AGENT FOR LOCAL-HIRE EMPLOYEES. TWO UNIONS, HOWEVER, COULD NOT AGREE ON WHOM WOULD BE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE IN THE SECRET BALLOT ELECTION. CUPE INSISTED THAT ONLY BLUE COLLAR WORKERS (ABOUT 80) BE ALLOWED TO VOTE; UNDE INSISTED THAT ALL ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES, BOTH BLUE AND WHITE COLLAR (103), BE ALLOWED TO VOTE. NAVY STOOD NEUTRAL. THREE PARTIES AGREED TO ASK NEWFOUNDLAND DEPARTMENT OF MANPOWER AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS TO MEDIATE
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ON VOTING UNIT. LATTER AGREED, BUT SINCE MEDIATOR NOT

DESIGNATED YET, ELECTION POSTPONED.

2. MAJOR ISSUES DISCUSSED WERE UNION SHOP, RIGHT TO STRIKE, AND WAGE DETERMINATION.

A. UNION SHOP. CUPE INSISTED ON FULL UNION SHOP. UNDE SAID FULL UNION SHOP, MODIFIED UNION SHOP, OR AGENCY SHOP SHOULD BE NEGOTIABLE. NAVY SUGGESTED ISSUE MIGHT BE DECIDED BY SECRET BALLOT VOTE OF ALL UNIT EMPLOYEES, EITHER BY TWO-THIRDS VOTE OR SIMPLE MAJORITY. THIS ISSUE SHOULD BE EASIEST TO RESOLVE.

B. RIGHT TO STRIKE. BOTH CUPE AND UNDE INSISTED THERE BE NO PROHIBITION OF RIGHT TO STRIKE. CUPE, HOWEVER, WOULD ACCEPT CLAUSE IN LABOR CONTRACT PROHIBITING STRIKES DURING TERM OF CONTRACT AND SUSPENDING PROVISIONS OF CONTRACT IN AN EMERGENCY. BUT ON QUESTION OF NEGOTIATING RENEWAL OF CONTRACT, CUPE WOULD INSIST ON RIGHT TO STRIKE AND WOULD NOT ACCEPT BINDING ARBITRATION, THOUGH IT MIGHT ACCEPT SOME FORM OF MEDIATION OR CONCILIATION. NAVY WOULD WANT A NO-STRIKE PROVISION IN CONTRACT AND DESIGNATED EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING FIREFIGHTERS AND BOILER PLANT OPERATORS, TO BE PROHIBITED FROM STRIKING. UNDE WAS SYMPATHETIC TO NAVY'S POSITION.

C. WAGE DETERMINATION. BOTH CUPE AND UNDE WANT WAGES DETERMINED BY COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, NOT BY SURVEY METHOD. UNDE, HOWEVER, WOULD TAKE WAGE RATE DETERMINED BY SURVEY METHOD SERIOUSLY INTO ACCOUNT IN ITS COLLECTIVE BARGAINING POSITION. NAVY WANTS WAGES DETERMINED BY SURVEY, NOT BY COLLECTIVE BARGAINING.

3. WE ARE HOPEFUL THESE ISSUES CAN BE SUCCESSFULLY RESOLVED AFTER ELECTION AT BARGAINING TABLE AND NOT LEAD TO CONFRONTATION OR STRIKE ACTION.

4. EMBASSY MAY DRAW ON ABOVE INFORMATION IN RESPONSE TO EXTAFF INQUIRIES (REFTEL B). IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF, IN DISCUSSION WITH GOC OFFICIALS, EMBASSY WOULD REQUEST FOR US COPIES OF FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL LABOR LAWS
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RELEVANT TO ARGENTIA LABOR SITUATION, I.E. THOSE LAWS DEALING WITH UNION SHOP, RIGHT TO STRIKE, AND WAGE DETERMINATION PARTICULARLY FOR GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES. INGERSOLL

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